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'Gritty' Philadelphia pitches itself as low-cost U.S. World Cup choice

Philadelphia, United States

Philadelphia is presenting itself as the U.S. World Cup host city offering fans the best value for money, with affordable transport, accommodation and food while other venues are pilloried for gouging supporters.

Fan groups have panned plans to charge \$150 per person for a short roundtrip to the New Jersey stadium near New York that will host the soccer tournament's final match on July 19.

By contrast, fans travelling to the Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia on the US East Coast will be charged just \$2.90 to reach the venue on the subway.

"We want to make sure that it is accessible and affordable for fans," Philadelphia Chief Deputy Mayor Vanessa Garrett Harley told AFP at a media event Tuesday.

"If we price the transportation at some exorbitant rate, then you have already shut out a whole



Workers prepare the field at Lincoln Financial Field, one of the stadiums hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, on April 28, 2026.

class of folks."

The United States has 11 venues holding matches at the World Cup, which it is co-hosting with Canada and Mexico. The tournament kicks off in Mexico City on June 11.

Fears of sky-high costs have led organizers FIFA to announce an extra \$100 million to help the 48 participating teams cover the expense of being in North America after federations raised the alarm over potential financial losses.

Astronomical ticket prices, far exceeding those charged in Qatar in 2022, have also drawn the ire of fans already facing elevated costs, particularly in megacities New York and Los Angeles.

For the many supporters expected to travel without match tickets, the "City of Brotherly Love" says it will offer a free fan festival for the World Cup's 39-day duration.

A daily crowd of 15,000 will have space to watch matches and sample local food and entertainment at Philadelphia's Lemon Hill. The city of 1.6 million has long grappled with high crime rates but authorities say murders have sharply declined in recent years. There is also a rush to be ready on time, with roadworks in several areas of the city and scaffolding still packing the grand 30th Street rail hub as it prepares for an influx of visitors.

But with negative headlines about soaring hotel prices elsewhere in the country, Philadelphia is looking to capitalize.

'Blue-collar' background

An investigation by The Athletic found that hotel room prices in Houston jumped 457 percent for the Texas city's first World Cup fixture,

compared to 198 percent in Philadelphia. Rooms in Kansas City surged by 364 percent.

"You can still get a (mid-range) hotel in Philadelphia over July 4 for about \$400 a night" \$200 for a basic room said Anne Ryan, deputy secretary at the Pennsylvania Tourism Office.

She touted the low transport costs for spectators, the free fan festival and "that you're not going to be price gouged when it comes to hotels" as making Philadelphia the best value US venue.

"There's just no other comparison," she told AFP.

Organizers say the tournament is expected to attract some 500,000 visitors to the Philadelphia region located between Washington and New York split evenly between U.S. visitors and those from abroad.

The soccer showcase will bring a \$700 million boost to the area, according to Econsult.

"Philadelphia is a hard-working, gritty city, a blue-collar city, and we take a lot of pride in that," said Meg Kane, the Philadelphia Soccer 2026 host city executive.

"While we have the arts and culture... we also have all of the restaurants and the food and beverage experiences that can meet any price point," she added.

"It allows for so many different people, socio-economically, to be able to have a World Cup experience here."

While Philadelphia will host six games at its reconfigured NFL venue, concluding a Round of 16 match on July 4, Kane said the city was a viable fan base through the end of the tournament.

The journey from Philly to the New Jersey stadium hosting the final "is often-times a much... easier route to travel" than from even Manhattan, she said. □

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Jerome Powell: Fed chair who stood up to Trump set to finish tenure on top

Washington, United States
U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, a soft-spoken central banker who chooses his words carefully, is perhaps an unlikely candidate to become one of the few figures who have stood up to President Donald Trump.

Nevertheless, after months of insults, abuse and pressure to lower interest rates, Powell on Wednesday will address what is likely his last press conference as Fed chief where he is seen by many as having prevailed over the browbeating Republican.

In a statement in January, Powell revealed that Trump's Justice Department had opened an unprecedented investigation into him and the Fed over cost overruns related to building renovations. At the time, he warned the probe should "be seen in the broader context of the administration's threats and ongoing pressure." Now, almost four months later, the tables have turned dramatically.

The Justice Department said Friday it would drop the probe, which was seen as part of a wider effort



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell speaks during a press conference following the Federal Open Markets Committee meeting at the Federal Reserve on April 29, 2026 in Washington, DC.

to pressure the Fed after Trump attempted to unseat Fed Governor Lisa Cook over mortgage fraud allegations.

A key Republican senator had vowed not to clear the president's nominee to replace Powell, Kevin Warsh, unless the investigation was over.

Powell, too, said in March he would not leave the Fed board where his term as a governor, but not chair, concludes in January 2028

-- as long as the probe was ongoing.

The fact that Powell felt the need to respond forcefully in January conveyed "just how serious the issue is," said Jason Furman, a top economic adviser to former US president Barack Obama.

Now, all eyes will be on Powell on Wednesday to see if he will choose to continue on the board past his time as chair, a move that would be unusual but not unprecedented. It would

also deny Trump an additional nomination to the powerful committee.

"We continue to believe he is more likely than not to remain on the Board," said EY-Parthenon chief economist Gregory Daco. "The rationale is institutional continuity, not politics."

- Praise and criticism -

Powell, a 73-year-old former investment banker, took the helm at the Fed in 2018 after he was tapped by Trump to replace Janet

Yellen. It was Trump's first presidency.

Powell then withstood months of withering attacks from Trump for raising interest rates.

When Covid-19 took hold in 2020, the Fed rapidly slashed its benchmark rate to zero and rolled out new support measures, moves that helped to prevent a more severe economic downturn.

His tenure won him praise and criticism from all sides as he maintained the central bank's independence. Over that tumultuous period, Powell, who is also called "Jay," managed to forge consensus among the diverse members of the Fed's rate-setting committee.

In 2021, the wealthy Republican with no formal economics training was nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden to lead the Fed for a second term. He proceeded to oversee a series of sharp rate hikes in 2022 to curb surging inflation after the pandemic, before beginning to cautiously lower rates again in 2024 and 2025 as he eyed the price effects from Trump's sweeping new tariffs. □

Trump says U.S. has 'a shot' at crewed Moon landing before presidency ends

Washington, United States
U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday said he believes NASA has a good chance of returning astronauts to the Moon's surface before he leaves the White House at the start of 2029.

Asked if he thought the US space agency would achieve the goal during his second term, Trump said, "Oh, we have a shot at it." "I mean, we don't like to say 'definitely,' because then you say, 'oh, we failed,'" he added. But "I think we have a good shot," the Republi-

can president emphasized while welcoming to the Oval Office the four Artemis II astronauts who recently returned from a trip around the Moon.

The four astronauts Americans Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canadian Jeremy Hansen who carried out that mission earlier this month traveled further into space than anyone before.

It was also the first crewed journey around the Moon in more than 50 years.

The United States is targeting a lunar landing in 2028. But experts have voiced skepticism that the lunar

landers being developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin companies owned by billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos respectively will be ready in time.

NASA administrator Jared Isaacman, who was at the White House for Wednesday's event, told Trump that "we have an achievable plan to go back to the Moon."

China is forging ahead with its own effort, targeting 2030 to put astronauts on the lunar surface.

Trump on Wednesday meanwhile jokingly asked, "is a president allowed to go up on one of these mis-

sions?"

"We can get working on

it Mr President," Isaacman

replied. □



U.S. President Donald Trump greets the Artemis II astronauts, pilot Victor Glover, mission specialist Christina Koch, commander Reid Wiseman and mission specialist Jeremy Hansen of CSA (Canadian Space Agency), in the Oval Office of the White House on April 29, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Anxiety, resentment around AI spur violence against tech's figureheads

New York, United States

Several proponents of artificial intelligence (AI) have become the victims of violent acts in recent days, reflecting the existential dread around the emerging technology and the public's growing resentment towards its advocates.

Billionaire OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is among the most prominent, with someone throwing a Molotov cocktail at his home on April 10. A suspect, 20-year-old Daniel Moreno-Gama, has been arrested.

But the violence extends beyond Silicon Valley's elite to include local policymakers, like Ron Gibson, a city councilmember in Indianapolis who had 13 bullets shot through his front door after expressing support for a data center construction project.

Those behind the April 6 attack also left a note reading "No Data Centers."

"Anxiety about emerging technologies is nothing new," said researcher Nirit Weiss-Blatt, whose Substack newsletter "AI Panic" covers the growing hostility towards artificial intelligence. "With Artificial Intelligence, though, it feels more ex-



An image depicting OpenAI's CEO Sam Altman is displayed outside the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building on April 27, 2026 in Oakland, California.

treme," she added, noting that Moreno-Gama was radicalized through the "'AI existential risk' rhetoric" rather than its employment or environmental impacts. "We need to have a broader discussion about how the 'extinction risk' rhetoric radicalizes the most vulnerable individuals," Weiss-Blatt said.

"The fact that some edges justify violent acts is very troubling, and it needs to be condemned as strongly

as possible."

The attacks against AI figureheads have no demonstrable ties to one another, nor do they claim affiliation with any shared organization.

But Mauro Lubrano, a lecturer in International Relations at the University of Bath, said calling such actors lone wolves "is actually not that accurate, because these groups are embedded in some sort of digital ecosystem."

Lubrano connects the re-

cent string of violence to the vandalism of Tesla vehicles and dealerships in 2025 in response to founder Elon Musk's work with the administration of US President Donald Trump.

The recent reports of violence have led to an increased demand for physical protection among tech companies.

"In recent months, we've definitely seen a clear uptick," said Rory Moran, who oversees executive security

at United Security, Inc.

"These AI and technology companies, especially the big ones, they're always in the news, and when that happens... we're going to see an uptick in interest in potential attacks," he added.

- 'Violence will not help' -

The response to the violence on the Internet has been less panicked.

Many commentators on platforms like TikTok have downplayed or justified the attacks, comparing those involved to Luigi Mangione, the suspect behind the murder of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson in 2024.

But some organizations advocating for limiting AI expansion, such as Pause AI and Stop AI, now worry they will be associated with endorsing violent acts against AI proponents.

Dean Ball, a former AI policy advisor for the Trump administration, wrote in a post on X: "The rhetoric of the pause/stop crowd is out of control and it has gotten worse with time."

"This rhetoric always had the potential to cause violence and now this seems to be no longer hypothetical," he added. □

Uber adds hotel booking in push to become 'everything app'

New York, United States

Uber on Wednesday unveiled a new feature allowing users to book a hotel room directly from its app, the latest step in its push to become a one-stop shop for everyday needs.

The company had already broadened its ambitions in 2014 with the launch of Uber Eats, which started as a food delivery service before expanding into wider shopping, from cosmetics to electronics.

The San Francisco-based company will now let users book hotel rooms through the app via a partnership with travel site Expedia, which lists more than 700,000 properties. The tie-

up also envisions eventually adding short-term rentals from the Vrbo platform.

The hotel booking tool works much like other travel sites, with search, maps,

and filters for price, amenities, and guest ratings. Users can pay with card details already saved in the app. "We're no longer just an app for rides, or even

two apps, or family of apps for both rides and eats. Uber is now an app for everything," chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi said at a presentation on Wednesday in New York.



The Uber company logo is seen in the Falchi Building on June 26, 2024 in New York City.

"Together, we can reduce the number of steps, we can save people time and money," Expedia chief Ariane Gorin added.

The move reflects a broader trend toward apps that handle many aspects of daily life -- a model long established in China, where platforms like WeChat and Alipay bundle together payments, bookings, messaging, and much more. Rival Airbnb has been on a similar path. The home-

rental company introduced bookable local activities back in 2016 and last summer added on-demand personal services such as haircuts and massages, while also launching its own ride-hailing option. Elon Musk has outlined similar ambitions for X, the social network formerly known as Twitter, and has said a banking feature is on the way.

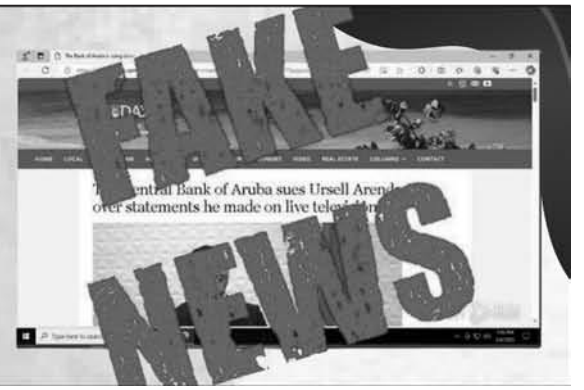
On the AI front, Uber said users will soon be able to ask the app to plan a week of meals, generate a shopping list, and arrange delivery all in one go.

A voice assistant is also in the works, letting people navigate the app through natural conversation. □

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Australian climber on record sea-to-summit Everest bid



This handout photograph taken on April 22, 2026 by Stanley Gaskell shows Australian climber Oliver Foran (R) trekking in Kothe at Makalu Barun National Park in Nepal.

Kathmandu, Nepal

Among the hundreds of climbers hoping to scale Everest this season, 27-year-old Australian Oliver Foran began his journey far away, cycling and then walking all the way from the sea.

Foran is seeking to break the 67-day "sea-to-summit" record, first pedaling 1,150 kilometers (715 miles) from the warm waves of the Bay of Bengal in India to Nepal and now trekking to the icy 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak.

"I always wanted to climb Mount Everest, but I wanted to do it in a special way," Foran told AFP by telephone on a break from his long hike upwards to Everest Base Camp, and then to the highest place on Earth.

It is also a deeply personal journey, with Foran raising funds for youth mental health.

The former real estate agent climbed his first major mountain, Nepal's 6,189-metre (20,305-foot) Island Peak, in 2024.

He then summited 6,812-metre (22,349-foot) Ama Dablam last year.

He hopes Everest will be his first 8,000-metre mountain. He has been training cycling, exercising and working on his breathing for the past six months to build endurance for the altitude.

- 'Unique' -

The sea-to-summit is a rare feat, first completed by another Australian, Tim Macartney-Snape, in 1990. Macartney-Snape spent three months walking from

sea level to the Everest summit, and it was his documentary that sparked the idea for Foran.

The current record is held by South Korean climber Kim Chang-ho, who walked and then kayaked the Ganges River, cycled to Nepal and then trekked up to the base camp in 2013, five years before his death on another mountain.

Foran aims to slash a week off that record and reach the summit in 60 days.

"It is a challenging task and a unique one," said Gelje Sherpa, his lead guide and expedition organizer at AGA Adventures.

"There are so many facilities and options to summit Everest in a record time now, but he is using only his own human power. That is big."

Foran cycled across India and Nepal in the first 16 days, navigating sweltering hot plains before steep, relentless hills.

He said he is driven by "something bigger" than himself, the memory of his teenage grief when his mother died of brain cancer.

"I didn't know how to process it... Life on the outside looked pretty good, but inside I was just emptier than ever," he said.

The unresolved grief reached a breaking point seven years later.

Foran said he had "made up my mind that that was it" but a call to a friend proved life-saving.

"I made the decision then that... if I ever got the opportunity to stop somebody else from getting to that point or to give them another way, I would," he said. □



People stand close to a stranded humpback whale in the Wismarer Bucht bay of the Baltic Sea off the island of Poel, northern Germany, close to the village of Faehrdorf-Hof, on April 28, 2026.

Boat carrying stranded whale 'Timmy' reaches Denmark

Berlin, Germany

A special barge carrying a humpback whale that was stranded in Germany had entered Danish waters by Wednesday afternoon and is expected to reach the North Sea in two days, local officials said.

The whale, dubbed "Timmy" by German media, was coaxed into the vessel in a last-ditch rescue attempt on Tuesday after a weeks-long struggle for survival on the Baltic Sea coast.

The ship Fortuna B, which is towing the barge, was located between the islands of Langeland and Lolland in southeastern Denmark at around 1400 GMT, according to the Vesselfinder website.

"If everything goes well, he'll be in the North Sea in two days. The very worst is already behind him now," Till Backhaus, environment minister for the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, told the Bild daily.

Speaking to reporters on the island of Poel, where the whale was most recently stranded, Backhaus said the animal was "doing well" and had made sounds during the night.

Backhaus thanked rescuers for their "wonderful" effort in "an exceptional situation that is hardly comparable anywhere in the world in this form".

The whale had been struggling for more than a month around the German coast, getting stuck on sandbanks and then managing to free itself again several times.

At the start of April, officials gave up on trying to rescue the animal, saying they believed it could not be saved. But this triggered an outcry and authorities were persuaded to approve a privately financed rescue plan proposed by two wealthy entrepreneurs.

The barge idea was hatched after their initial attempt to save the whale with inflatable cushions and pontoons was unsuccessful. □

Wild Balkan berries keep gin taste steady as climate shifts

Vranje, Serbia

As he threaded his way through the scrub in Serbia's southern hills, Slobodan Velickovic stopped to inspect the small indigo berries that have made the Balkans a key part of the global gin industry. Although still months from the autumn harvest, the 34-year-old picker who has collected juniper here since childhood expertly plucks an almost ripe berry from the bush.

"Strong aroma, beautiful taste," he told AFP as he chewed the fruit.

In Serbia, juniper is not farmed but gathered from wild bushes by hand.

Growing over a wide range of the northern hemisphere, the hardy plant thrives on rocky slopes and in harsh conditions where few others can survive.

Despite that resilience, the presence of juniper has declined in parts of Europe in recent decades particularly in lowland areas where it once grew, under pressure from climate change, overgrazing and habitat loss. For pickers like Velickovic, the increasing variability of weather extremes also impacts the harvest in his region.



Juniper berry picker Slobodan Velickovic inspects berries on bushes scattered across hills near the southern Serbian city of Vranje on April 15, 2026.

"It depends on the year whether it's dry or rainy. Those conditions affect quality," he said a shift that can affect flavour during distillation.

- Changing harvest conditions -

But for Balkan producers, pressures elsewhere also offer opportunity.

"In conditions of reduced yields in parts of Western Europe, the Balkans are increasingly positioning themselves as an alter-

native source of supply," Serbia's chamber of commerce said.

Serbia, with a long tradition of juniper picking, exports around 1,000 tonnes of juniper annually, according to the chamber.

"The quality in the Balkans is exceptional," said Tommy Haughton of Beacon Commodities, a global juniper wholesaler.

Haughton said the region offers larger volumes at lower prices than other sources, including Italy,

with long-standing supply networks built over generations.

But he warned that hotter summers and fewer very cold winters could affect future harvests, while forest fires can restrict access to picking areas and taint berries with smoke.

- Flavour should be consistent -

A rainy harvest can also pose a challenge for gin-makers trying to maintain flavour.

"As gin distillers, our entire business is built around you having a product that's the same yesterday as it was today," said Matthew Pauley, a researcher at the International Centre for Brewing and Distilling at Heriot-Watt University.

Rain during harvest can force berries to be mechanically dried with hot air.

This process can alter the volatile compounds in the berries, affecting what is later extracted during distillation and, in turn, the flavour, according to Pauley's research.

As a result, distillers might need to source juniper from other regions or, in extreme cases, modify a recipe.

"If we're doing our job properly, there should be no difference," he said.

- Centuries of experience - Protecting the taste in the glass falls to distillers like Ivan Lakatos, who runs a craft gin producer in the Serbian village of Belegis.

"The quality of juniper doesn't depend on the size of the berry itself, but on the intensity of its flavour, where it was picked," he said, as vapours rise from a copper still in the basement behind him. □

Japan cleaner goes viral with spa-like service for plushies

Fuefuki, Japan

A worn-out Pikachu plushie, tired teddy bear or stained stuffed animal can all get a new lease on life at a Japanese laundry service making beloved toys squeaky clean again.

Masakazu Shimura, a cleaning professional with three decades of experience, gave one stuffed Pokemon already in good condition a steam shower, carefully brushing it after a gentle bubble scrub, almost as if caring for a newborn baby.

Videos of the meticulous care the cuddly toys receive at his workplace, Cleaning Yonmarusan, have mesmerised plushy fans on social media, awarding the high-end fabric care viral fame and

attracting customers from around the world.

Relying on his expertise and experience cleaning everything from dress shirts to camping tents, Shimura washes and restores the delicate fabric of soft toys.



In this picture taken on April 27, 2026, dry-cleaning professional Masakazu Shimura cleans a soft toy at the facility of Cleaning Yonmarusan in Fuefuki city of Yamanashi Prefecture.

"While hand-washing, I carefully feel what kind of material it is and assess the condition of the material and so on, gently massaging it with my hands as I wash it," he told AFP.

Shimura is among a dozen

certified cleaning professionals at Yonmarusan, a regional chain in Yamanashi, west of Tokyo.

While the firm has been cleaning soft toys for decades, business has boomed thanks to viral social media posts in recent years on the back of a Gen Z adoration for plushies and Japan's love for everything cute and cuddly.

Today, the service cleans more than 10,000 soft toys every year, compared to roughly 1,200 annually a decade ago.

And some people even "come to Japan specifically for the purpose of having their soft toys cleaned", said Hisako Mori, the firm's public relations manager.

"While the cleaning is being done, they enjoy travelling around Japan. At the end of their trip, they pick up their stuffed animals before heading home."

Shimura said some clients wish to keep specific scratches or scribbles on their toys, as those marks sometimes carry precious memories.

"These items hold special memories. That's true for clothing as well, but even more so for stuffed animals, which we recognise our customers see as members of the family," he said.

"It's a process where we truly cannot let our guard down... When our customers are happy with the results, that's really the moment when we feel a strong sense of fulfilment." □



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(Oranjestad)—Up to grab an early dinner after a day of shopping or cruising? Take advantage of L'Avenue's Early Bird Special, and experience their innovative twist of traditional Belgian cuisine!

Located in a cozy nook at The Cove Mall—a short walking distance from the Holiday Inn and Paseo Herencia, this Belgian and French bistro offers a delicious and rich menu available through lunch and dinner from 11am to 10pm. Enjoy your lunch and/or dinner in a cool, air-conditioned interior area of the restaurant, accompanied by the warm lights and chic design that emphasizes the restaurant's laid-back, yet sophisticated ambience.

Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes



steak, chicken, fish, and even mussels and rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience!

But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available



every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$32 per guest, including a glass of house wine.

L'Avenue honors and takes pride in serving the traditional Belgian and French flavors, but does not shy away from offering a flexible menu for their guests' needs. That's right, L'Avenue also offers to cater for their guests' dietary restrictions, making sure that each guest gets well taken care of!

More information

L'Avenue is situated at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach and is open every day from 11am to 10pm for lunch and dinner. To book a reservation or ask for more information, please contact their phone line at +297 6996400, send an e-mail info@lavenuearuba.com, or visit their website at lavenuearuba.com □

What Aruba means to Dudley and Sarah!



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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Dudley and Sarah Gwaltney from Raleigh, North Carolina.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is about the resilience of the people here. This photo was taken on a sunset sail in September 2020. We came back to the island as soon as we could after the pandemic had begun. We were amazed at the welcome we received and the determination of the Aruban people to get through this time."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

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Beaches for the whole family to enjoy!

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when traveling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito



uito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of Pos Chiquito. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed

the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly

getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach

Yet another highly popular beach sites, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the

white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas.

Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore. □

Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill

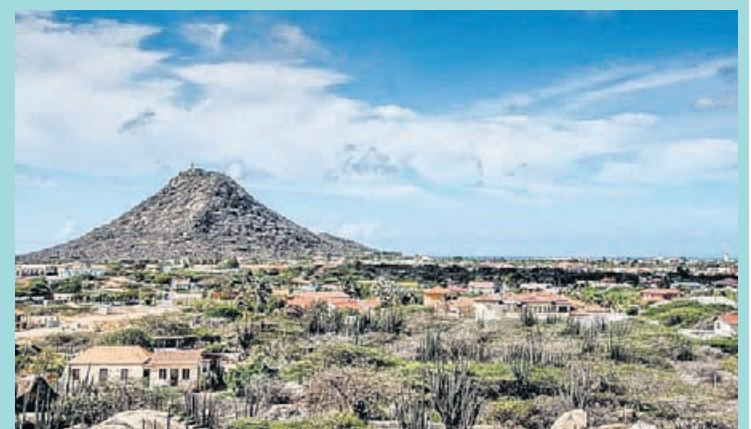
(Oranjestad) If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can

get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Edu-

ardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.



The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as

hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □

Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamento—at least not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con



ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean

"morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

Bon tardi

In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting

of the day.

Bon nochi.

You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much".

Tern season is here, and ACF is calling for their protection

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba has begun to see terns arriving along its coast to start their breeding season once again. An event that happens every year, the migration of terns to our island normally begins in March, but this year it was observed that they were already present as early as January.

In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns that normally breed from March to September every year.



However, ACF has noted that this year their arrival came earlier, and by the end of January a presence of terns was already being seen in their breeding areas. During this season, ten different species breed at different times. This is the reason why the season lasts for more than half a year.

The terns breed mainly in the Baby Beach area and along the north coast of Aruba. Baby Beach is a particularly

special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce.

Terns are very fragile and easily disturbed, especially during their reproduction rituals.

Their nests are divided into two specific sites on our island. The first is the reefs near the refinery in San Nicolas. These reefs become home to the terns, where they lay their nests either on the sand or in the small bushes around the reefs. These reefs are "off-limits" to the public; one of the only areas in Aruba that is completely

protected by law.

The terns also lay eggs along the north coast of our island, between cliffs and rocks throughout the area. This is where they are vulnerable to greater danger, according to ACF. Among these cliffs, everything is well camouflaged and cannot easily be seen, even by people who are walking or driving vehicles over the rocks.

The chicks have a natural behavior to "freeze" in place when they sense danger. This puts them at risk of being stepped on. For this reason, ACF is making a call to the community and authorities to help protect our historic birds.

As general advice, ACF says to keep distance and be cautious when passing through areas where terns

are breeding. "If a tern starts screaming at you, that is a sign that you are too close to their nest and eggs," Silva explained. These are the types of signals the Aruba community needs to be aware of.

So once again, a call goes out to the entire community of Aruba: Let's protect our terns during an important season for them. Educate yourself and others about the birds, stay alert to harmful activities near nests, and share information with ACF if you notice anything unusual in nature. Together we can care for and strengthen our nature, and that begins with education.

Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) can be reached by phone at 585-1234 or by email at info@acf.aw

Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

Aruban fruits and vegetables



Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

Kenepa

Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the

tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

Druif

There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimarucu

Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste bet-

ter than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system.

Concomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Concomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in



salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensi-



fies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pampuna

In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruba is Sopi di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



CROSSWORD

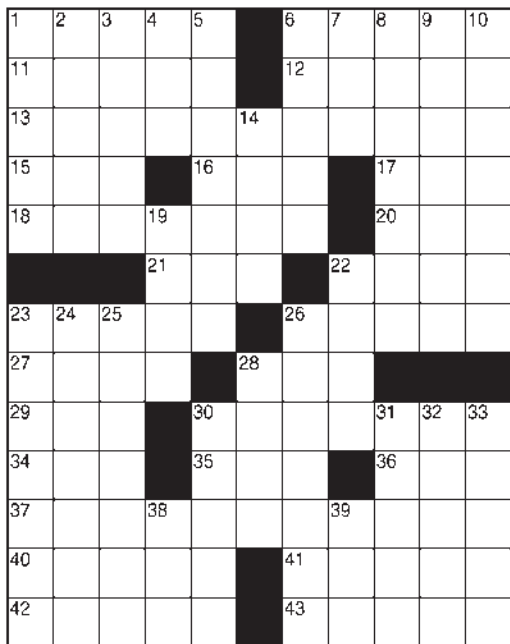
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

- 42 Oboe
1 Provide parts
food for 43 Classes
6 Venomous snake
11 Throw with effort
12 Irritate
13 Military, navy, etc.
15 Diner dessert
16 Corn spike
17 Mine yield
18 Butler or maid
20 Animal abode
21 Golfer Ernie
22 Witty remark
23 Sells for
26 Some statues
27 Aware of
28 Egg layer
29 In the style of
30 Diet unit
34 Stimp's pal
35 Maximum amount
36 Santa — winds
37 Groups of company vendors
40 Calendar entry
41 Question of place

DOWN

- 1 Cowboy wear
2 Eagle's home
3 Circus performer
4 Genesis name
5 Gives out new hands
6 Left, on a liner
7 German article
8 Breaks a cipher
9 Himalayan peak
10 Bristles at creator
14 Stadium group
19 White House power
22 Jupiter's wife
23 More vulgar
24 Taking a sabbatical
25 Spider-Man creator
26 Accordion part
28 Sports period
30 Play groups
31 Indy entrant
32 Like argon
33 Moves cautiously
38 Final part
39 Pi follower



A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-16

CRYPTOQUOTE

PYUQ U RQWUJAO QYMJA! QD

KO UZMCO KOJOUQY FYOWWB

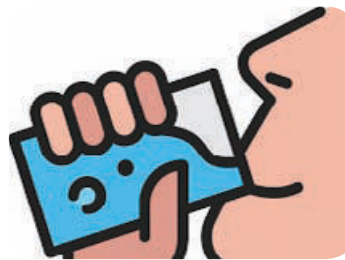
KZDRRDHR. — TDKUBURYM

MRRU

Cryptoquote: A SPOKEN WORD IS NOT A SPARROW. ONCE IT FLIES OUT, YOU CAN'T CATCH IT. — RUSSIAN PROVERB

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

02 SAT	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
05 TUE	CELEBRITY SILHOUTTE	Arrival: 08:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B
	CARNIVAL MAGIC	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
06 WED	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 11:59 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
12 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
19 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
20 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: I
	CARNIVAL VISTA	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C
21 THU	CARNIVAL VENEZIA	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
26 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

4/30

Answer to previous puzzle

1	3	8	4	7	6	5	2	9
2	9	4	1	8	5	7	6	3
6	5	7	3	9	2	1	4	8
7	8	2	5	1	4	3	9	6
3	4	1	2	6	9	8	7	5
5	6	9	7	3	8	4	1	2
4	1	5	6	2	3	9	8	7
9	2	3	8	4	7	6	5	1
8	7	6	9	5	1	2	3	4

Difficulty: ★★★

4/29

A researcher's quest to decipher a 4,000-year-old script from Iran

Liege, Belgium

While a modern-day war has focused the world's attention on Iran, for French archeologist Francois Desset it was a millennia-old mystery that drew him to the country.

His quest: to decipher the 4,000-year-old writing system of Linear Elamite that had long been considered impossible to crack.

"Of all the writing systems used in Iran, the only one that is truly local developed within the territory we now call Iran is Linear Elamite," the 43-year-old told AFP, at his office at Belgium's University of Liege.

"All the others cuneiform, the Arabic alphabet, or the Greek alphabet were imported from the west."

Desset's fascination with the subject was sparked in 2006 when he participated in excavations in the south of Iran that unearthed tablets written in Linear Elamite.

Made up of 77 signs diamonds, curves, and other geometric patterns the writing system comes from the Bronze Age civilisation of Elam that long ago vanished from the region.

Rediscovered in 1903 by a French mission exploring the archaeological site of Susa, it had stumped experts who only had a handful of sources to work with.

For years after his "first physical encounter", Desset struggled in vain to make a breakthrough.

"There were so many dead ends," he said.

That changed though when he gained access to vases covered in the writing that were held by the Mahboubian collection in London, named after a family of exiled Iranians.

"I was able to access ten new texts, and the key was in them," he recounted.

"The key to deciphering a script, as is so often the case, lies in proper names: names of places, gods, kings."

- 'Shilhaha' -

Desset's work has seen him



An Archaemenian clay tablet, in the Elamite scripts, which were written in cuneiform writing, is shown at Iran's National Museum in Tehran, 01 May 2004.

likened to Jean-Francois Champollion, the famed French philologist who deciphered ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs at the start of the 19th century.

"What did it for Champollion, was the names of rulers, Ptolemy, Cleopatra... He identified the symbols that recorded the names of their names," Desset explained.

"My Ptolemy was a ruler named Shilhaha, who reigned around 1950 BC." In a sequence of four symbols, he noticed that the last two were identical, a repetition that corresponded to the ending of the name "Shilhaha". Following that breakthrough, Desset now has been able to work on 45 inscriptions.

Now with the expertise he has gained he wants to go back even further and start

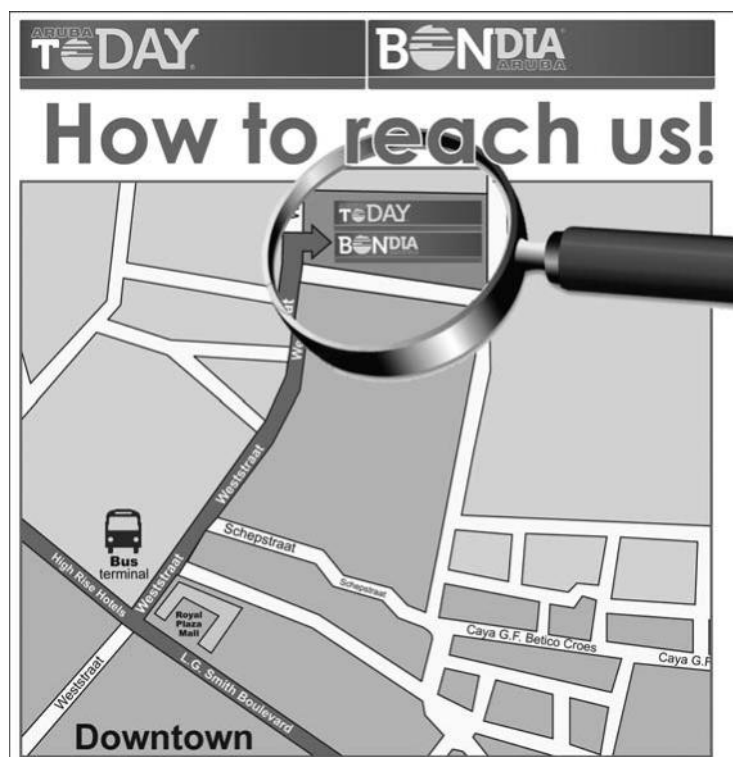
to work on tablets written in proto-Elamite, "some of the oldest written sources in the world".

But while Desset's research takes him back thousands of years in time, the dramas of the present conflict are inescapable.

At a time when US President Donald Trump has threatened send Iran "back to the Stone Ages", Desset hopes that his work can help highlight the country's long and rich cultural history. □

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Pos Chiquito

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220533

HEALTH



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7:00 pm/10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas
IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Oduber
Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police 100
Police Oranjestad 527 3140
Police Noord 527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
Police San Nicolas 584 5000
Police Tipline 11141
Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

'Godzilla Minus Zero' will show monster up close, director says

Las Vegas, United States
Godzilla will be closer to audiences than ever before in "Godzilla Minus Zero," the film's Japanese director said.
"I don't think we've ever been able to get this close to Godzilla before," Takashi Yamazaki told AFP in an interview on the sidelines of CinemaCon in Las Vegas. Yamazaki said the legendary monster's roars as well as the thunderous sound of his footsteps will reverberate through theaters in an unprecedented way. He said this is thanks to advancements in cinematic sound and visual effects in movie theatres, a place he described as Godzilla's natural habitat. The director who helmed the 2023 box-office smash "Godzilla Minus One," which earned an Oscar for Best Visual Effects said bringing audiences back to the cinema is not a matter of personal taste but a responsibility for filmmakers. "It falls partly on us the film-



Japanese filmmaker and visual effects supervisor Takashi Yamazaki poses during a photo session during Cinemacon on April 14, 2026 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

makers to constantly create new experiences and provide reasons for people to want to go to the movies and spend their time there," he said after presenting a preview of "Godzilla Minus Zero" at the industry's annual convention in Las Vegas.

The new movie, set to hit US theaters in November, stars Ryunosuke Kamiki and

Minami Hamabe, and is set in 1949, two years after the events of "Minus One." The production centers on the Shikishima family, who, "at the beginning of the film, are truly happy." "They have finally found a balance in what it means to be a family," Yamazaki said. "And then, once again, they are confronted with utter despair and a horrific tragedy."

The director added that audiences will be able to identify with the sheer effort required to summon the strength to recover and find the will to go on living. For the 61-year-old filmmaker, taking on a sequel presented specific challenges chief among them, the task of outdoing himself. "'Godzilla Minus One' was, fortunately, highly acclaimed and has become

one of the most beloved Godzilla films of all time," he said.
"That benchmark has become a new obstacle. Little did I know I was feeding my enemy," added the director.
But the chance to take a second pass at the monster gives him the opportunity to do things he couldn't last time around.
"I wasn't able to do everything with 'Godzilla Minus One,'" said Yamazaki. "So, one of my own new challenges is to put images and visuals on the screen that no one has ever seen before in a kaiju film." In the teaser the director presented at CinemaCon, Godzilla is seen face-to-face with the Statue of Liberty in New York.

The image caused a stir in the room, but Yamazaki cautioned that beyond the expectations the clip generated "the film will feature Japan much more than people imagine." "That scene is very important for the character in the film, and it is a very impressive kind of scene," he added. □

ARUBA TODAY

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'The White Lotus' drafts Laura Dern after Bonham Carter split

Los Angeles, United States
U.S. actress Laura Dern has joined the cast of "The White Lotus," HBO announced Tuesday, days after Helena Bonham Carter left the show.

The British star's departure, which came shortly after the new season started filming on the French Riviera, sparked a frenzy of internet speculation over a glitzy series that has

become as well known for its behind-the-scenes dramas as for its award-winning on-camera action.

Bosses at HBO said writer Mike White was having a rethink, with the role being rewritten and recast. "It had become apparent that the character which Mike White created for Helena Bonham Carter did not align once on set," a statement said. There were no immediate details on what kind of character Dern, 59, will play in the show, which typically involves murders, class tensions and sumptuous holiday spots.

The Emmy-winning series is currently filming primarily

in Cannes and St. Tropez, as well as Monaco. It will also include some scenes in Paris. The fourth season takes place against the backdrop of the Cannes Film Festival. Dern joins an all-star cast that includes British comedian Steve Coogan, as well as France's Vincent Cassel ("Black Swan," "Ocean's Twelve") and Heather Graham ("Boogie Nights" and "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me.") Singer AJ Michalka, and comedian Kumail Nanjiani also feature. Dern and White have previously worked together on HBO's "Enlightened" and the comedy-drama "Year of the Dog." □



Laura Dern attends AARP The Magazine's 24th Annual Movies For Grownups Awards at Beverly Wilshire, A Four Seasons Hotel on January 10, 2026 in Beverly Hills, California.

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Wembanyama's Spurs advance in NBA playoffs, 76ers stay alive

New York, United States

The San Antonio Spurs punched their ticket to the second round of the NBA playoffs on Tuesday, leading wire to wire in a 114-95 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Victor Wembanyama scored 17 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and blocked six shots to help the Spurs wrap up a 4-1 win in their best-of-seven Western Conference first-round series.

In the East, Philadelphia star Joel Embiid scored 33 points and handed out eight assists as the 76ers fended off elimination with a 113-97 victory over the Boston Celtics.

The Spurs, who clawed back from a 19-point deficit to win game four, burst out of the blocks and pushed their lead to as many as 28 before taking a 65-45 lead into half-time.

Portland unleashed an 11-0 run that cut a 20-point fourth-quarter deficit to nine, but the Spurs responded.

De'Aaron Fox scored 13 of



Victor Wembanyama #1 of the San Antonio Spurs gestures in front of Jerami Grant #9 of the Portland Trail Blazers during the fourth quarter in Game Five of the First Round of the NBA Western Conference Playoffs at Frost Bank Center on April 28, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas.

his 21 points in the final period and Wembanyama playing his second game after missing one with a concussion delivered two massive blocks as San Antonio won a playoff series for the first time since 2017. "It did feel like we let our foot off the gas," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "NBA games are long, it's

not an excuse. That means we've got to be better, but zero lead changes is zero lead changes.

"We have a lot of things we can be better at," Johnson added of his young team, who had six players score in double figures. "But we're ready to step up to the plate and swing."

Seeded second in the West, they are chasing a sixth NBA title and their first since 2014.

They will face either the Denver Nuggets or Minnesota Timberwolves in the Western Conference semifinals.

The Timberwolves lead the Nuggets 3-2 in their series.

- Embiid in rhythm -

In Philadelphia, a dominant second half by Cameroon-born big man Embiid playing just his second game since an April 9 emergency appendectomy enabled the Sixers to cut the series deficit against Boston to 3-2.

"It's kind of hard. I only had one chance to go up and back (on the court) before I came back," Embiid said. "Using this game and last game to kind of get back into it."

"I found my rhythm in the second half. We adjusted some stuff at half-time. I feel OK. I feel good. We got a win. That's all that matters."

The series shifts back to Philadelphia for game six on Thursday with a seventh game, if needed, in Boston on Saturday.

"We did our job," Embiid said. "We're going to need everybody to come back to Boston."

Tyrese Maxey added 25 points and 10 rebounds for the 76ers, who also had 16 points and nine rebounds from Paul George. □

Joshua warm-up defeat would 'kill' Fury fight, warns promoter Warren

London, United Kingdom

Veteran boxing promoter Frank Warren has warned Anthony Joshua that defeat by Kristian Prenga would "kill" plans for a long-awaited clash against fellow British former world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury.

It was announced on Monday that Fury and Joshua would meet later this year following several false starts years after they were both at their peak.

Warren, whose Queensberry group has promoted several of Fury's bouts, wants the proposed fight to take place at London's Wembley Stadium.

But he warned on Wednesday that the fight would only take place if Joshua got

past Albania's Prenga in Saudi Arabia on July 25.

"If he loses to this guy (Prenga), it kills the (Fury) fight," Warren told the BBC.

As for whether Fury would want another fight before facing Joshua, he said: "Tyson wants to keep busy. That's the mentality he has."

"When he's in the gym, he goes to the gym for his mental wellbeing, as well as physically. "He needs focus, a date when he's going to fight and at the moment we don't have that date (for Joshua)."

Joshua's bout against Prenga will be his first since he was involved in a car crash in Nigeria in December that killed two of his friends. □



British boxer Anthony Joshua celebrates after defeating U.S. boxer and influencer Jake Paul (not pictured) in a non-title heavyweight bout at the Kaseya Center in Miami, Florida, on December 19, 2025.

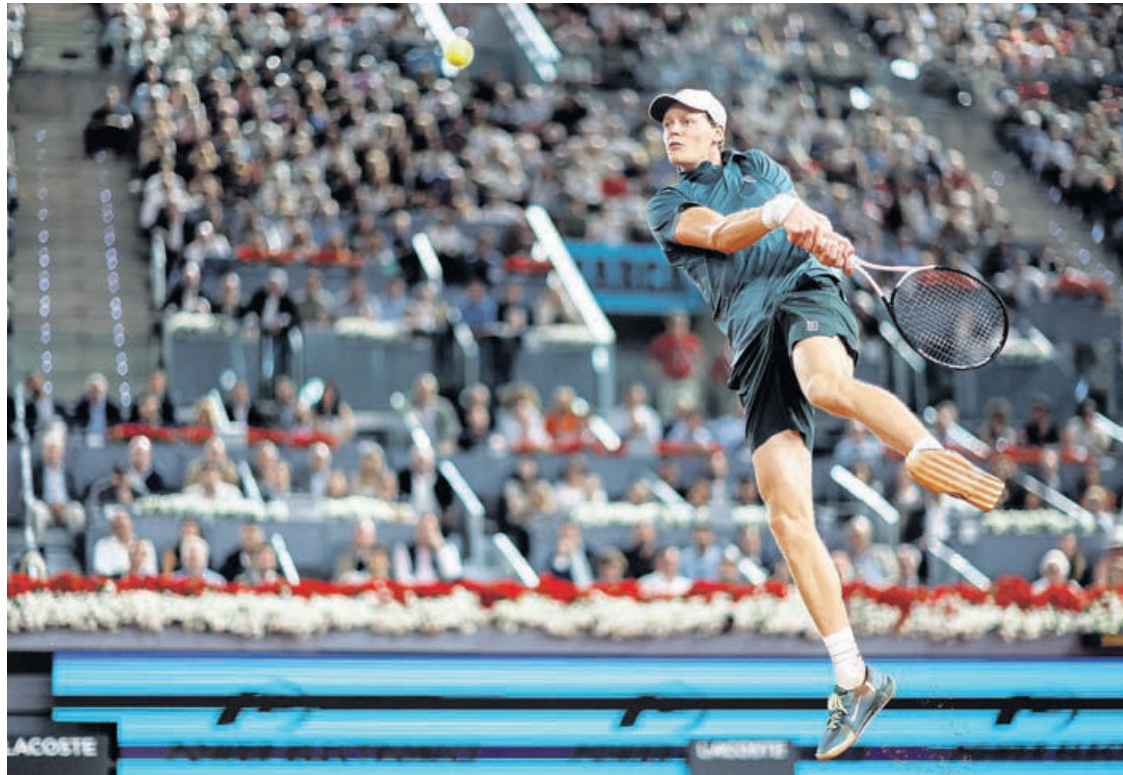
Sinner stops Jodar to book spot in Madrid Open semis

Madrid, Spain

Jannik Sinner ended the inspired run of teen home favourite Rafael Jodar with a 6-2, 7-6 (7/0) victory at the Madrid Open on Wednesday to complete his set of semi-finals reached at all nine Masters 1000 tournaments.

The 19-year-old Jodar has taken the tour by storm this clay season, winning a maiden ATP title in Marrakesh, and making the semi-finals in Barcelona and the quarter-finals in Madrid before he was stopped by the world number one at the Caja Magica.

This time last year, Jodar was playing college tennis for the University of Virginia and was ranked 687 in the



Italy's Jannik Sinner returns a ball to Spain's Rafael Jodar during their 2026 ATP Tour Madrid Open tennis tournament quarterfinal singles match at the Caja Magica in Madrid, on April 29, 2026.

world. He will crack the top 35 when the new rankings are released on Monday. Sinner was seriously tested before he extended his current winning streak to 21 consecutive matches. The world number one will face Jiri Lehecka or Arthur Fils in Friday's semi-final. "He pushed me to the limit. He's an incredible player. I tried to be ready as much as I could. First time playing against him," said Sinner.

"I'm incredibly happy. It has been a very high-quality match. Got lucky a bit in the second set, but also a little bit of experience. And so I'm very happy about today's match and obviously very happy to be the first time here in semis. It means a lot to me."

The first-set scoreline may have read 6-2 but it was far from a routine affair for Sinner, who found himself facing a young opponent who could match his firepower, particularly on the forehand wing.

The Italian was tested in multiple service games, including a marathon one at 2-2, and had to save a pair of break points before he took a one-set lead in 44 minutes.

Leaning on the rowdy home support that included several Real Madrid stars, past and present, Jodar skirted danger at the start of the second set and put pressure on the Sinner serve.

But despite his best efforts, Jodar couldn't convert any of the five break points he created as Sinner levelled for 4-4.

The set fittingly went to a tiebreak, which was dominated by Sinner, who won the last 11 points of the match to advance to his first Madrid semi-final.

Lucky loser Anastasia Potapova reached the first WTA 1000 semi-final of her career with a hard-fought 6-1, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 performance against former world number one Karolina Pliskova. □



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